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A GREEK WEDDING.

It was in the autumn of 18— that I came in sight of Tenos, where the family of my mother resided. I was one-and-twenty, and had not seen Greece for fifteen years. It will be readily understood that I was very much excited in my feelings when the small coasting vessel landed me at a little fishing village, where I was told that Leon Vogorides, my maternal uncle, resided. He was a fisherman and a sailor—a man who carried on a thriving business, employed numerous hands, and was as genial as he was rich.

He received me with open arms, laughed at my ignorance of Greek, plied me with Tenos wine, and was as hospitable and kind as an uncle can be. But his reception was cold to that I received from Penelope Vogorides. Penelope was sixteen, short in stature, with jet black eyes, raven hair, cheeks of rosy hue, and such a smile!—an anchorite would have melted from his austerity to look at her. She chattered and prattled, and laughed and sang, like a child of nature as she was; and my new-fangled ways and ideas, my wondrous voyages and travels, my tales of London, the vastness of which she could not credit, all afforded her infinite amusement and delight.

I fell in love with her, of course; this was to be expected; and after a certain amount of delay and hesitation, I was accepted by the father and daughter. Our marriage was fixed for the autumn, as I then was of age; and pleasant indeed were the summer months on that sunny isle, with my beautiful cousin by my side—my lovely, my dear Penelope.

One day a party of youths came and informed me that a distant relative of my own upon the hills was about to be married, and that there was to be a great jollification on the occasion. I was invited, and so was Penelope; but she had sprained her ankle several days before, and she yet insisted on my going.

So I went. It was half-a-day's journey up in the hills, and there was no conveyance. We accordingly started the day before, and rambling along, arrived at the village at a late hour. Early next morning we were aroused by the noise. The day's rejoicing had commenced.

A Greek island wedding is a very serious affair. It costs at least a year's income. All the friends are invited for a week's rejoicing, during which whole time, mirth and jollity are kept up. All went on very well until dinner time, when for the first time I learnt an extraordinary custom which alarmed me, who had been used to a very sober life. The first cup was filled, and the wine-masters of the feast, those whose duty it is to make the guests drink, began their office. Up went the cup, which every man and woman present had to drain to the very dregs. When this was done, the wine-captain went round, made each guest turn his cup up, and hold his thumb-nail under. If one drop, however small, however faint, of wine, trickled down, the guest was bound to drink another; and this lasted during the dinner, after dinner, at the dance, and up to a very late hour; in fact, until every body went off to rest, utterly incapable of supporting themselves any longer.

I drank frantically. I refused not one cup, I hesitated not after the first few glasses, but held my hand out for more. I was wild with excitement, I whirled about like a dancing dervish, I danced with the priest, I made them roar with laughter at my evident intoxication; in fact, I was the life and soul of the party, though, had there been one sober man present, he would doubtless have looked upon me as a raving idiot.

Next morning I rose with a fearful headache, pale, exhausted, ill, and in want of new stimulants. I drank wine before breakfast, and this revived me. I need scarcely enlarge on the whole week's debauch. I only recollect that on the seventh day I was quite mad. I had drunk deeply, and yet I determined to start on my way home, having a kind of vague idea I should die if I remained there much longer.

I started down the hill-side roaring some snatch of a song, rolling from side to side, laughing, and refusing all assistance. My companions, who were much more sober than I was, offered

to take my arm. I was irritated at having my sobriety doubted, and at last, on their insisting, some mad frenzy seized me, and away I went off the path, over rocks, down a ravine, helter-skelter, on a wild and hazardous course. They shouted to me to stop; I heard them, but heeded them not. I ran all the faster; and they, seriously alarmed, came after me as well as they could. But I was actuated by insanity; a wild and feverish power of locomotion aided me; I ran on, on, on, without fatigue; and yet I was rather heavy for my age.

I ran in this way for an hour, until I began to be out of breath. I was hot, glowing, mad. A river was before me. It had to be forded somewhere. I cared not how or where. I asked not was it deep or shallow, but I leaped desperately forward; my foot struck a stone, and I fell flat on my face in shallow water, stunning myself by the blow.

What followed only came to my ears a long time after. I became insensible, and was unconscious for about ten days. When I woke to life again in a sick chamber, I found curtains drawn around me, and a nurse looking curiously at me.

"Where am I?" I asked faintly.

"Hush!" was the only reply I received.

The old nurse then went out, and I distinctly heard a whispering outside. Then in came Penelope, very pale and very serious. She looked at me, and she saw by my smile of recognition that I knew her. She smiled in return, and then motioned me to be silent.

Days passed thus, until at last I could rise. I then found that I had an ugly scar over one of my eyes for life; and I noticed, worse than all, that Penelope grew cooler and cooler as I recovered, while her father was very serious.

At length, when I was quite well, the terrible truth was revealed to me.

The marriage was broken off. Penelope refused to marry one who could take so little care of himself.

I urged the novelty of the situation, the occasion, the custom of the island. All in vain.

"Penelope," I said, "do not break my heart. I cannot live without you."

"It is too late," she replied sadly; "I no longer love you."

It was agreed, then, that I should return to England, and give up my dear, my beauteous bride.

A few days before the time fixed for my departure, I sat down at the dinner-table of old Vogorides. It was the first time the doctor had left me free to eat and drink as I pleased. I ate my soup, my fish, my bread; I ate meat, and in every way exhibited the return of health. But I left the wine-cup untouched.

"Why do you not drink?" said Penelope with a laugh.

"I never will touch wine or spirits again," replied I, coldly and firmly.

"Will you have the courage to persist in that, Themistocles?" asked she, with a glow on her cheek.

"I will. Because I was weak once, it does not prove that I am weak by nature. Everybody is liable to temptation. The man who falls, and then resists the fall again, is a man of character and determination. I will never drink wine again."

"My dear husband," she cried, clasping me in her arms, "I love you more than ever. You thought my affection gone. No! I did but mean to try you. I was angry at your coming home in that disgraceful way; but I had never abandoned you in my heart. This resolution proves your affection. There is my hand."

I kissed it fervently; the old man laughed and clapped his hands. Before many days had elapsed, Penelope became my wife; she is now my dear companion in happy England, the head of my house, the mother of my children; and I am rich and prosperous.

I never recovered my disgust of the grape-juice, and have never since tasted wine.

At my marriage even I violated all the rules of my native place, and though everybody else drank wine, I wholly abstained; and I must say, that the light in which I saw the carousing revellers did not tend to diminish my desire to remain what I am—a total abstainer.